Cultivating the Dialogue

Social Media & Consumer Perceptions of Agriculture
HELLO
my name is

Alison Kosakowski Conant
Today’s Agenda

1. Consumer Perceptions
2. The Challenge We Face
3. Social Media Solutions
4. Next Steps
Plants & Animals?!
Farmers/Ranchers < 2%
US Population 2010

- Urbanized Areas: 71%
- Rural: 19%
- Urban Clusters: 10%
The other 98%
Bridge the Gap
1.2 Billion users
1 Billion users
241 Million users
200 Million users
150 Million users
70 Million users
Listen. Organize. Create.
“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

-Stephen R. Covey
LISTEN!

What do you hear?

• Concerns?
• Confusion?
• Contradiction?
What matters to this person?

Even the squirrels know. Via @progressiveparent

Likes this.

Squirrels can read?!?

Via undergroundhealth.com
What do you wish they knew?

BREAKING NEWS!
ALIENS REFUSE TO DO CROP CIRCLES IN GMO FIELDS.
"JUST TOO RISKY."
Do we have common ground?

DRINK YOUR OWN MILK
NOT MINE
How can I build a bridge?

COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO!
THERE'S POOP IN YOUR FOOD!!!
Just a few thoughts... I've got to rage against stuff, that's all the rage now.

Every day third world kids die from malnutrition or some other preventable tragedy, so shut up about how [redacted] your life is.

Second, food isn't a right/privilege, it's a good that must be paid for... Stop acting like I'm supposed to give a [redacted] you're not happy.

First off, urban people... Shut up about agricultural production practices... If you don't like it, get off you [redacted] and go farm/ranch.
“Most of the trouble in life comes from misunderstanding, I think”

— L.M. Montgomery
“Listen” Take-Aways:

Empathy is key!
Build understanding
No place for negativity

✓ Create lists of Influencers
✓ Follow key hashtags
  • #GMO
  • #AnimalLiberation
✓ Learn from friends and foes
“We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.”

— J.K. Rowling

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
2012: #saveBillandLou
Cultivate Advocates

**Mrs Zookeeper** @MrsZookeeper
I always liked taking my hard working farm kids to [@panerabread](https://twitter.com/panerabread) Those days are over. Yes. Panera. My 18 hour work days supply you.

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**Panera Bread** @panerabread
@MrsZookeeper We never intended to insult anyone with our EZ Chicken posts, especially farmers. We truly appreciate all their hard work.

3:24 PM - 27 Jul 2013
Advocate: USDA #MyFarmBill

Retweeted by NOFA Vermont

Farm Service Agency @usdafsa · Sep 24
We're still looking for #MyFarmBill stories! Check out what others have said & tell us what's at stake for YOU ow.ly/p1FTb

UnSqGreenmarket @UnSqGreenmarket · Sep 26
#MyFarmBill supports 12,000 acres of small family farms who sell directly to NY'ers on 1.75 acres of UnSq Park. pic.twitter.com/ISQhFV0F7q
“Organize” Take-Aways:
Social Media is a powerful way to connect within the ag community
✓ Identify Agvocates
✓ Find strength in numbers
✓ Build your professional network
✓ Create a collective voice
“Write it. Shoot it. Publish it. Crochet it, sauté it, whatever. MAKE.”

— Joss Whedon
Writer, Director, Producer
Farm Blogs

Diana Prichard: Righteous Bacon
Sticky: Authentic Relatable Sharable
“Create” Take-Aways:
You can make a difference by telling your story
✓ Start small. It’s easy!
✓ Capture & share everyday moments
✓ Send a positive message
✓ “Share” & re-post content from others
✓ Be sticky: authentic, relatable, sharable
It can’t wait
Start Today

Search out diverse points-of-view

Keep an open mind

✓ Search for 3 #hashtags
  #frankenfood #factoryfarm #vegan

✓ Assess their concerns, confusion, contradictions

✓ What did you learn?
Find your people! #AgOutlook

- Make conf. connections count

Business cards ➔ LinkedIn Twitter

10 new connections!

- Mark your calendar for #AgChat
  Tues 8-10pm EST
Start Today

✓ Live tweet this conference
   #AgOutlook #USDATMS

✓ Commit to one ag-post per week
   Photos
   Ag Facts
   Share/Retweets
   Blog Comments
We’ve Got What it Takes

#AgOutlook
Questions?

@vtfarmgirl